

Paper # 2

**Developing New Perspectives on Managing
Co-occurring Mental Health and Substance Abuse
Disorders in the Criminal Justice System**

October, 1996

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 1996 The National GAINS Center convened two Regional Forums to examine strategies for "Planning Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services for Jail Detainees in the Era of Managed Behavioral Health Care." The forums occurred in San Francisco on June 3-4 and in Orlando, Florida on June 10-11. Each Forum attracted nearly 100 participants from 22 counties in nine states across the country.

The Forums were developed as an opportunity for multi-disciplinary teams from U.S. jails to create or enhance local approaches for integrating services to individuals with co-occurring disorders at critical points within the criminal justice system. This cross-system approach was a natural outgrowth of the overall mission and purpose of the GAINS Center.

The four major principles derived from these two Regional Forums were:

1. Creating opportunities for multiple system team participation is crucial to accomplishing real change at the local level on issues of co-occurring mental health and substance abuse services in criminal justice systems.
2. Integration of mental health and substance abuse services is an important ultimate goal but intermediate steps of improved cooperation, collaboration and coordination can produce significant improvement.
3. Jails are excellent starting points for developing services for persons with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders by linking community-based services with jail-based programs and procedures.
4. Co-occurring services for women and juveniles require special attention because of the especially severe deficits in meeting the needs of these two groups.

DEVELOPING NEW PERSPECTIVES ON MANAGING CO-OCCURRING MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDERS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

In June 1996 The National GAINS Center convened two Regional Forums to examine strategies for "Planning Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services for Jail Detainees in the Era of Managed Behavioral Health Care." The forums occurred in San Francisco on June 3-4 and in Orlando, Florida on June 10-11. Each Forum attracted nearly 100 participants from 22 counties in nine states across the country.

The Forums were developed as an opportunity for multi-disciplinary teams from U.S. jails to create or enhance local approaches for integrating services to individuals with co-occurring disorders at critical points within the criminal justice system. This cross-system approach was a natural outgrowth of the overall mission and purpose of the GAINS Center. Organized to improve the treatment and management of individuals with mental illness and substance abuse disorders in the justice system, the Center has focused on activities that help local jurisdictions expand knowledge and improve practical application of effective strategies. In addition, while promoting these new methods for acquiring, adapting and utilizing information, GAINS has been addressing the federal goal to decrease stigmatization of the target population across all three systems.

The GAINS Center approach to improving the intervention, outcome and management of individuals with co-occurring disorders is unique. Rather than rely only upon the traditional clearinghouse or knowledge transfer method, the Center's staff work interactively with front line practitioners, administrators, consumers/survivors and families to produce systemic change. This interactive process supports many tasks important to the GAINS Center agenda. The process is built upon the core belief that the creation of interventions and the strategies for their planning, implementation and operation should be based on the best available research. The GAINS Center staff includes researchers who have produced key findings in many of the substantive areas related to the GAINS Center agenda. This combination of research, program development, and management skills enables the GAINS Center to identify, assess and integrate research and program "learnings" for effective use by frontline professionals. Among the GAINS Center's prime tasks are:

- creating and sharing information about programs and resources across existing networks,
- developing and maintaining opportunities for cross-training of professionals and peer learning experiences and,
- adapting model programs to specific local applications.

To fully assess the impact of the GAINS Center, a formal outside evaluation is integral to its workplan. Under the direction of Drs. Thomas Kiresuk (University of Minnesota) and Robert

Rich (University of Illinois), this evaluation began at the inception of the GAINS Center and will chronicle and assess the overall approach and all of its specific activities.

The GAINS Center offers a unified national locus that helps localities develop or enhance mental health and substance abuse services to persons in contact with the criminal justice system.

As part of its hands-on approach, the GAINS Center provides technical assistance to facilitate planning, implementation and operation of appropriate, cost-effective programs matched to local needs and circumstances. In keeping with its premise of collaboration, the GAINS Center actively works to involve new constituencies, such as family members and consumer/survivors, and encourages new forms of collaboration among criminal justice, mental health and substance abuse professionals. The GAINS Center expects that the results of this effort will address two equally critical outcomes:

- improvements in the quality and scope of information to professionals and,
- increased impetus for systemic change in the organization and financing of services to the target population.

Accordingly, the Regional Forums offered an ideal venue to achieve GAINS Center objectives. To assure the success of the Forums, three specific goals were identified to help GAINS staff and participants from local jurisdictions maximize both local and system-wide goals. These were:

1. Engage multi-disciplinary teams, comprising jail and detention facility administrators and sheriffs, county mental health and substance abuse administrators, court and law enforcement officials, elected officials, consumers, and family members, and involve them in cross-training and peer learning experiences directed at effectively planning for the needs of persons with co-occurring disorders at key points in the criminal justice system.
2. Use information about model mental health and substance abuse programs for jail detainees to develop practical applications that take into account unique local conditions, political environments and fiscal realities.
3. Develop and strengthen partnerships and networks between professionals and consumers/survivors and family members that support the creation and implementation of integrated services for detainees with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders.

Forum Participants Endorse Team-Building Strategies

The Regional Forums brought together a rare constellation of individuals, jurisdictions and disciplines. High priority jurisdictions were identified by self-nomination, NIC's Jail Division, GAINS Center staff and CSAT's Target Cities program. This method of identifying participants

ensured jurisdictional readiness and resulted in the participants sharing a similar knowledge base at the outset of the forums.

Based on participant feedback and subsequent local activities, both Regional Forums achieved their goal of engaging appropriate teams of mental health, substance abuse and corrections professionals. Participants included teams from local jails with rated capacities of 250 or more. At a minimum, the teams included a jail administrator, a mental health and a substance abuse provider. Of the 22 jurisdictions, 12 sites paid for one or more additional participants. This structure was designed to maximize local leadership capacity and to encourage peer-training as a method for learning and problem-solving. Also participating, were faculty members, federal representatives from CSAT, CMHS, NIC and GAINS, including the Center's evaluators, and staff from FMHI. Orlando brought together 51 participants from 13 jurisdictions, along with faculty and staff.

Each Forum began with a general overview of clinical, fiscal, environmental and political issues affecting jurisdictions and their capacity to serve the target population. Although each event featured different faculty members, the agenda at both Forums was identical. The agenda was designed to familiarize team members with the overall objectives of the GAINS Center and important national trends in financing, program development, implementation and research. These issues included: integrated care and services options, quality of care and management, specific needs of female and youth offenders, critical issues in personnel, organization and structure of managed care systems, and an update on the latest federal, state, and local revenue and financing trends affecting the targeted population.

Representative reactions from participants included:

1. "The opportunity to discuss the identified issues with my team. Getting this opportunity is hard 'back home' while working."
2. "The local 'break out' groups were especially helpful in allowing different representatives from my jurisdiction to share information and discuss concrete plans to improve care."
3. "The Forum was well organized with a cross-section of many different systems in different areas approaching problems in new and creative ways. This made it easy to judge where we stand as a system and where we need to go next. Very useful!"
4. "The opportunity to problem-solve with our team in addition to didactic training."
5. "The staff was helpful, knowledgeable, and ready, willing, and able to provide assistance."

Forums Stimulate New Activities in Local Jurisdictions

The Forums were excellent opportunities for jurisdictions to expand and fine-tune their knowledge about serving and managing the target population. Teams were encouraged to share information and experiences between jurisdictions, creating possibilities of collaboration in order to approach problems in new ways. One team member, summarizing the benefits, said, “The cross-pollination of ideas and issues made it easy to judge where we stand as a system and where we need to go next.”

One particular outcome of this interactive structure was the development of an informal network of Forum participants. Since returning to their home jurisdictions, team members are continuing to contact this network to share information and exchange program and funding strategies. Many jurisdictions have also planned visits to other jurisdictions within the network. For example, the Monmouth County, NJ team planned to visit the NIC Resource Center in Lucas County (Toledo), OH whose staff was part of the San Francisco forum faculty. Because of the success of this collaboration, the GAINS Center is working to develop additional opportunities to expand and strengthen this emerging network.

Helping individual jurisdictions work more effectively with their own team members to develop solutions for local application was also a primary goal of the Forums. To achieve this goal, GAINS staff designed a special track of breakout sessions, bringing team members from the same jurisdiction together for intensive discussion around local concerns and issues.

On and off site evaluations from Forum participants attributed much of the success of the Forums to the experience -- and results -- of the breakout sessions. The design and staffing of the breakout sessions exemplify the GAINS Center commitment to collaboration, peer-learning and cross-training of professionals. These sessions allowed each jurisdiction the opportunity to meet and plan with other team members from the same jurisdiction with a focus on further developing local relationships.

At the conclusion of the breakout session of both Forums, participants had completed a workbook summarizing team decisions and issues for follow-up. This innovative tool, designed by GAINS staff building on NIC training materials, allowed jurisdictions to delineate specific objectives and to document strategies for accomplishing their goals. In addition, the workbooks now serve as instruments for continued follow-up with the GAINS Center, particularly with respect to requests for technical assistance. While analysis of these workbooks has just begun, some common themes have emerged across the participating jurisdictions. For example, all jurisdictions indicated their intentions to:

- identify internal and external funding sources to support integrated services;
- increase local and state level emphasis on the importance of integrating services to the target population;

- develop support for increased collaboration and integration through education and public awareness;
- convene appropriate local and state task forces and advisory councils and engage their support for goals established during the Forums;
- develop appropriate cross-training initiatives that support integrated services;
- seek opportunities to strengthen and expand the network of professionals and staff that evolved through the Forums; and
- promote the use of the breakout session format as a method for continuing necessary collaboration at home.

Beyond assessing these global priorities, GAINS staff has also been tracking progress with jurisdictional initiatives since the Forums. The following examples represent some major activities planned or discussed during the Forums and now underway in participating jurisdictions. In each case, jurisdictions are emphasizing a renewed commitment to cross-agency planning and extending the multi-disciplinary network that supports effective implementation.

San Francisco Co., CA - The team has met several times since the Forum with a focus on developing a Consumer Peer Counseling Program in the county jail. Emotions Anonymous has been engaged to help with program development. Scheduled for implementation in six months, the program will target individuals with co-occurring disorders. In addition, a training program was held in the jail for families of people with co-occurring disorders to foster relationships between families and service providers. The impetus for the training was a suggestion made to the team at the Forum.

Ventura Co., CA - Since the Forum, the county completed consolidation of its mental health and substance abuse agencies in a new, single agency. The Behavioral Health Department now incorporates the FACT program, which was represented at the Forum, and the county Drug Court. The team has identified a need for cross-training the staff from these consolidated agencies. A request for technical assistance to accomplish this training is being submitted to the GAINS Center.

Washington Co., MD - Immediately upon their return from the Forums, the team members met with a special advisory committee established to help carry out the local plan formulated during the Forum. The team and committee agreed that developing a brochure for distribution to local judges was a priority. This brochure will be part of a campaign to educate the judiciary about the issues involving offenders with co-occurring disorders. A town meeting and a presentation to the local Bar Association on similar issues are currently being planned.

Plans are also being considered to introduce substance abuse services into the maximum security section of the jail. The team is working to identify funding for a program to provide medication to inmates upon their release from the jail.

Wicomico Co., MD - Since the Forums, implementation of a Mobile Crisis Unit (MCU) has become the team's priority. Funding is now available through a Byrne grant and activities are underway to define operational goals and objectives. The MCU is being designed to respond to incidents throughout the county involving people with mental health and substance abuse disorders. Proposed staffing includes a mental health and an addiction counselor, a law enforcement officer, and a part-time psychiatrist. The jail Mental Health Task Force is meeting to adopt policies and procedures for the MCU and the team anticipates requesting assistance from the GAINS Center to complete development of these procedures.

Also on the agenda are plans to integrate pretrial, community services and home detention into the jail's mental health services system. This effort will be underway within the next month.

King Co., WA - The team attending the Forum also comprises the county's Strategic Planning Team. Since their return, they have been meeting weekly to discuss implementation of the strategic plan. The team has developed a structure for an Advisory Council that will be responsible for integrating mental health, substance abuse and the jail treatment team, and is currently seeking strategies to overcome any obstacles to implementation.

The King County team has requested assistance from the GAINS Center in identifying funding for a dedicated staff position for their High Utilizer Pilot program.

Yakima Co., WA - Weekly meetings have been initiated to review mental health and substance abuse services in the jail and to explore necessary improvements. Team members also met with the Sheriff to discuss modifying the Behavioral Health contract to include health care staff participating in jail classification decisions. Additional information is being sought about other jail mental health programs coping with similar issues.

Key Conclusions

Clearly, the Regional Forums pushed participating jurisdictions toward better, more effective methods for serving persons with co-occurring disorders in the criminal justice system. Forum participants and faculty agreed that these accomplishments largely followed from the unique design of the Forums. Specifically, the format called for maximizing collaboration, strengthening integration and keeping a critical focus on the specialized needs of both jails and communities. As such, the Forums supported successful development of local initiatives and helped participants to assess more general policy questions that will shape the future. Because of the successful outcomes of the Forums, it is useful to examine lessons learned and to describe key conclusions gained through the experiences of the participants. The following is a brief summary of those conclusions:

1. Creating opportunities for multiple system team participation is crucial to accomplishing real change at the local level on issues of co-occurring mental health and substance abuse services in criminal justice systems.

The cross-agency, multiple system team approach reflected in the Forum structure and organization was a principal building block for the Forums' success. This concept helped to ensure

that the appropriate, high-level decision-makers would be identified before the Forums and involved in the multi-disciplinary planning and program development discussions throughout the Forums. Whether the team of local professionals was meeting for the first time or accustomed to working together in partial configurations in the past, each jurisdiction discovered new and useful resources, especially mutual willingness for collaboration. The benefits for team members were as varied as the jurisdictions themselves. These included opportunities for cross-training, leadership development and expanded information about local systems, policies and financing issues related to serving dually diagnosed individuals. Follow-up with local jurisdictions has confirmed that the energy and commitment created during the Forums has had a significant carry-over as team members returned to local jurisdictions to begin planning and implementation activities. As one team member observed, "The composition of the teams, the staff support from GAINS, and the timely nature of the meeting allowed us to meet the goals we set for ourselves."

2. Integration of mental health and substance abuse services is an important ultimate goal but intermediate steps of improved cooperation, collaboration and coordination can produce significant improvement.

The National GAINS Center convened the two Forums with a specific goal of improving, through greater integration, services to persons dually-diagnosed with mental health and substance abuse disorders within the criminal justice system. While the complete integration of professionals, programs and financing is an end-goal of this process, there are graduated steps in a continuum toward integration that are valid - even critical - accomplishments which deserve recognition. This continuum includes: **cooperation, coordination and collaboration**. For most institutions, program and services integration results only after deliberate effort to succeed at each point along the continuum. For some participating jurisdictions, cooperation among corrections, mental health and substance abuse services was in a nascent state. As such, the opportunity for face-to-face contact without the pressures of daily work responsibilities resulted in significant accomplishments of changed behavior and new expectations. Other jurisdictions had a history of working cooperatively and collaborating on joint planning, procedures and information sharing. For these localities, Forum goals have involved fine-tuning relationships and further extending the commitment to joint responsibility for clients. In fact, despite where local jurisdictions may have been along the continuum leading to full integration, the Forum recognized the value of their starting point and capacities. As can be seen from the follow-up activities described above, all participating jurisdictions used the Forums to support progress at home by focusing on activities that recognize unique local situations.

3. Jails are excellent starting points in developing services for persons with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders by linking community-based services with jail-based programs and procedures.

Because jails are community-based institutions, they are specially positioned to provide essential linkages with the corrections system and the appropriate community services. While the management of persons with special needs is problematic at all levels of the criminal justice system (including contact with police, jails, prisons, probation or parole), jails are a crucial link to both the front end (arrest) and back end (parole) of the corrections system. By increasing their understanding

of the issues surrounding dually diagnosed individuals in local jails, professionals in the domain of corrections, mental health and substance abuse can become key players in: improving communication between the corrections system and community agencies; providing health, social services, mental health and substance abuse treatment; improving integration of community and institutional services appropriate to serving this population; and maximizing the use of community resources. Jails are critical junctures for tying together the pivotal points of referral and supervision to support the effective transition from incarceration to the community. This, in turn, promotes the highest possible functioning of the individual, smoother jail management and reduced recidivism.

4. Co-occurring services for women and juveniles require special attention because of the especially severe deficits in meeting the needs of these two groups.

Women in correctional settings have multiple issues besides their criminal offenses. Among these issues are health, mental health and substance abuse, social concerns (including parenting, domestic violence, self-esteem issues), and vocational and education needs. These factors are present among male populations, but they are much more prevalent among women. In addition, correctional settings are typically designed and administered for males, without regard to differences between genders, particularly in the area of services, dangerousness, and interpersonal styles.

Juveniles also have multiple problems, including a full spectrum of health, mental health, substance abuse, victimization, social and educational concerns. Issues with juveniles are especially exacerbated because meeting their complex needs requires the participation of many state and local agencies such as social welfare, child protection, health, income maintenance, and job training.

Until recently, efforts to address the needs of youth and women with co-occurring disorders have been both sporadic and inadequate. Many initiatives that have begun to focus on these populations have increased awareness of their unique needs and begun to document effective programs and approaches. The GAINS Center provides the structure to capitalize on this attention, and is currently preparing to focus on women and juveniles as special topics during the next year.

Next Steps

The results of the Regional Forums and the breakout sessions enhance the potential for widespread change, not only with participating jurisdictions, but with communities nationwide. The evolution of this movement began with the selection of jurisdictions ready to enact change in their local communities and capable of finding local resources. The GAINS Center is providing supplemental resources and ongoing technical assistance to support integrated jail initiatives. To help sustain momentum, GAINS staff has initiated additional follow-up activities:

- GAINS staff will continue to contact the participating jurisdictions every three to six months to assess their status with implementation activities, and will respond to specific requests for technical assistance.

- At the request of Forum participants, letters have been sent to key county officials from selected jurisdictions, thanking them for allowing team members to attend the Regional Forums and reaffirming the successful outcomes.
- GAINS staff is developing a newsletter for Forum participants designed to keep jurisdictions informed of progress with implementation and to help maintain the network that emerged during the Forums.
- The GAINS Center is developing additional meetings and conferences to promote further progress with the activities generated at the Forums.

The Regional Forums presented a unique opportunity to take a broader view of the needs of individuals with co-occurring disorders within the criminal justice system. This population presents extensive implications for communities across the country. Despite innovative work by state and federal agencies and many professional organizations, the GAINS Center offers the first unified approach to meeting the complex needs of this population.

Because of the Forums, local jurisdictions were successful in developing or extending strategies to serve this population better. The GAINS Center will maintain its focus on the design, implementation and operation of these integrated programs as progress continues in each jurisdiction. These activities have been designed to be highly interactive, with each jurisdiction informing another's work. Taken together, these activities will contribute substantially to the development and implementation of cost-effective, integrated programs and care for persons with co-occurring disorders in the criminal justice systems.